

legislation to providing relief for families suffering under the impact of Hurricane Floyd, to paying our U.N. dues, to passing the work incentives improvement act so that people with disabilities can gain a job without losing their health care.

In addition to the budget, I urge Congress to keep working on other critical issues: commonsense gun safety legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands; a real Patients' Bill of Rights families have been waiting for for too long; a raise in the minimum wage, which shouldn't be held hostage to special interest tax cuts that aren't paid for and don't address national needs; and finally, measures to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and modernize Medicare to include a voluntary prescription drug benefit. I urge Congress to work with me in meeting all these goals.

This has been a good week for America. We're staying on the path that has brought us the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, nearly 20 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 20-year low in poverty rates, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. Now we've got the chance of a lifetime to shape the future of our dreams for our children. Let's finish the job.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:15 p.m. on November 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Announcement of Cyprus Peace Talks *November 14, 1999*

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has just informed me that President Clerides of Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash have accepted an invitation to start proximity talks in New York on December 3. The goal of the talks is to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The talks will be held under U.N. auspices. They will go forward without precondition. They will focus on the substantive issues that divide the parties. The United States will work closely with the Secretary-General to ensure that the talks are productive.

This summer the United States took the lead in calling on the United Nations to convene Cyprus talks. Ever since, together with our European allies and the U.N., we have been intensively engaged in an effort to bring the parties back to the negotiating table after a stalemate

of more than 2 years. I am pleased that these efforts—including my meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit at the White House, Secretary Albright's conversation with President Clerides, and a month of shuttle diplomacy by my Special Envoy Al Moses—have helped to produce this result.

These Cyprus talks can bring us one step closer to a lasting peace. A negotiated settlement is the best way to meet the fundamental interests of the parties, including real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

The Cyprus problem has been with us for far too long. It will not be resolved overnight. But today we have new hope. I ask the parties to approach this opportunity with good faith and the determination to build for all the people of Cyprus a future that is brighter than the past.